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PAGE 02 MANAGU 02661 01 OF 04 241840Z

TAGS: PHUM PREF PROP, MOPS NU HO  
SUBJECT: MASS FLIGHT OF MISKITO INDIANS AGAIN THREATENS  
SANDINISTA IMAGE

REFS: A) MANAGUA 2548 B) FBIS LD200150

1. (U) SUMMARY.

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THE FLIGHT OF 10 TO 12 THOUSAND MISKITO INDIAN REFUGEES  
TO HONDURAS IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS POSES A SERIOUS PROBLEM  
FOR THE SANDINISTAS' EFFORT TO PORTRAY THEMSELVES AS A  
POPULAR GOVERNMENT INNOCENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES. THE  
PREVIOUS WAVE OF MISKITO REFUGEES, IN 1982, LEFT A PERMA-

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NENT STAIN ON THE SANDINISTA IMAGE. THIS TIME THE GON  
HAS RESPONDED WITH A PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN TO SHOW THAT THE  
MISKITOS FLEEING TO HONDURAS ARE NOT REFUGEES BUT VICTIMS  
OF MASS KIDNAPPING BY THE CONTRAS, AND THAT ITS OWN EFFORTS  
ON THE COAST ARE DIRECTED ONLY TOWARD POLITICAL DIALOGUE  
AND DEVELOPMENT. BUT THE REFUGEES TELL OF NEW FIGHTING  
AND SANDINISTA ATTACKS ON VILLAGES. THE FLIGHT OF MISKITOS  
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TAGS: PHUM PREF PROP, MOPS NU HO  
SUBJECT: MASS FLIGHT OF MISKITO INDIANS AGAIN THREATENS  
THE SANDINISTAS HAVE RESPONDED TO THE OUTFLOW WITH A MAJOR  
PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN DESIGNED TO CONTRAST THEIR INNOCENCE  
AND GOOD INTENTIONS WITH THE WICKEDNESS OF THE CONTRAS AND  
CIA. ITS PRINCIPAL THEMES ARE THAT: (1) THE MISKITOS IN  
HONDURAS WERE KIDNAPPED BY CONTRAS AND ARE HELD THERE  
AGAINST THEIR WILL; (2) THIS IS PART OF A CIA PLAN TO  
FRUSTRATE AUTONOMY AND CREATE A SEPARATE GOVERNMENT ON THE  
COAST; AND (3) THE REPORTS FROM HONDURAS ON REFUGEES AND  
SANDINISTA ABUSES ARE BEING ORCHESTRATED OR FABRICATED BY  
THE USG.

4. (U) MASS KIDNAPPING

THE GON REPEATEDLY HAS CLAIMED THAT THE MISKITOS IN  
HONDURAS ARE NOT REFUGEES BUT KIDNAP VICTIMS. COMANDANTE  
BORGE PRESENTED AN EXTREME VERSION OF THIS IN A RECENT  
SPEECH (REF A) WHEN HE CLAIMED THAT 12 THOUSAND MISKITOS  
HAD BEEN KIDNAPPED IN FOUR DAYS BY KISAN/FDN FORCES, WITH  
THE DIRECT ASSISTANCE OF THE U.S. MILITARY AND THE CIA.  
THESE SAME FORCES, WITH THE CONNIVANCE OF HONDURAN  
AUTHORITIES, ARE PREVENTING THE THOUSANDS OF KIDNAPEES  
FROM RETURNING TO NICARAGUA, BORGE SAID.

5. (U) UNHCR PETITIONED

THE GON HAS BUTTRESSED ITS CLAIMS OF MASS KIDNAPPING AND  
FORCIBLE DETENTION BY REQUESTING THAT THE UNHCR INTERCEDE  
WITH THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT TO SECURE THE RELEASE OF THE  
KIDNAPPED MISKITOS AND SAFEGUARD THEIR RETURN TO NICARA-  
GUA. ACCORDING TO FSLN DAILY BARRICADA OF APRIL 22, THE  
GON HAS ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE UNHCR PROPOSE A JOINT

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COMMISSION ON REFUGEES TO THE HONDURAN GOVERNMENT. BARRI-  
CADA OF APRIL 23 REPORTS THAT UNHCR OFFICERS FROM GENEVA  
AND THE PRESS WILL BE TRAVELLING TO THE RIO COCO AREA  
ABOUT APRIL 26 TO ASSESS THE SITUATION.

6. (U) SEPARATIST PLANS

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A NEW THEME INTRODUCED IN BARRICADA OF APRIL 23 IS THAT THE CIA, KISAN AND THE FDN PLAN TO DETACH THE NORTHERN PART OF THE ATLANTIC COAST FROM NICARAGUA AND CREATE A PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT. COMANDANTE JOSE GONZALEZ, FSLN POLITICAL SECRETARY FOR THE REGION, CLAIMED THAT THE MASS KIDNAPPINGS WERE DONE TO REINFORCE THIS SEPARATIST PLAN.

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7. (U) PEACEFUL INTENTIONS

THE SANDINISTA MEDIA ARE STRESSING THE GON'S PEACEFUL EFFORTS AS A COUNTERPOINT TO THE WARLIKE ACTIONS OF THE CONTRAS. RECENT ARTICLES IN BARRICADA AND GON-SUBSIDIZED EL NUEVO DIARIO (END) HAVE TOLD OF GON INVESTMENT IN REPAIR SHOPS, ROADS AND BRIDGES FOR THE AREA. THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR DONATED A HOSPITAL BUILT FOR ITS SOLDIERS TO THE HEALTH MINISTRY. A SHIPLOAD OF FOOD FROM CUBA ARRIVED THIS WEEK IN PUERTO CABEZAS, THE REGIONAL CAPITAL AND SITE OF RECENT FOOD SHORTAGES. OTHER STORIES TELL OF GON ATTEMPTS TO SECURE A CEASE FIRE, AND ITS SUCCESS WITH SOME KISAN LEADERS. THE EMPHASIS IS ON SANDINISTA EFFORTS FOR DIALOGUE AND DEVELOPMENT ON THE COAST.

8. (U) COUNTERATTACK ON REPORTS FROM HONDURAS

BARRICADA AND END OF APRIL 22 ALSO ATTACKED U.S. EFFORTS TO CALL ATTENTION TO THE PLIGHT OF THE MISKITOS. BARRI-

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TAGS: PHUM PREF PROP, MOPS NU HO  
SUBJECT: MASS FLIGHT OF MISKITO INDIANS AGAIN THREATENS

CADA DEVOTED HALF A PAGE TO EXCERPTS FROM AN AMERICAS WATCH REPORT OF APRIL 11 THAT, WHILE IT ADMITS THAT THE MISKITOS FLED OUT OF FEAR OF THE SANDINISTAS, CLAIMS THAT THE FLIGHT OF THE MISKITOS WAS "A PREARRANGED PLAN" CARRIED OUT BY KISAN TO INFLUENCE CONGRESSIONAL VOTING ON CONTRA AID. END OF APRIL 22 USED STORIES FROM THE BOSTON GLOBE AND PHILADELPHIA ENQUIRER, ON THE TRANSPORTATION OF REPORTERS TO REFUGEE CAMPS IN U.S. HELICOPTERS AND ALLEGED KISAN ATTEMPTS TO COORDINATE REFUGEES' STORIES, TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE CLAIM THAT THE MISKITOS IN HONDURAS ARE REFUGEES IS A "COARSE TRICK" PLANNED IN WASHINGTON.

9. (U) SOVIETS APPARENTLY CONCERNED

SOVIET CONCERN WITH THE POTENTIAL DAMAGE THEIR NICARAGUAN CLIENTS COULD SUFFER FROM A NEW WAVE OF MISKITO REFUGEES IS SHOWN IN A RARE TASS ARTICLE FILED FROM PUERTO CABEZAS BY SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SERGEY GORBUNOV. HE REPORTED THAT NINE THOUSAND MISKITOS TRIED TO RETURN TO NICARAGUA, BUT WERE PREVENTED FROM DOING SO BY "ARMED GANGS OF CIA MERCENARIES." TASS QUOTES TOMAS BORGE'S ALLEGATION THAT U.S. FORCES WERE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE KIDNAPPING, AND CALLS THE SITUATION ON THE RIO COCO "ANOTHER LARGE SCALE ACT OF TERRORISM" BY THE CIA (REF B).

10. (U) REFUGEES' MOTIVES

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A) THERE ARE SEVERAL POSSIBLE MOTIVES FOR THE MISKITO OUTFLOW. MANY OF THE NEW REFUGEES HAD PREVIOUSLY BEEN IN SANDINISTA RELOCATION CAMPS. AS PART OF THE AUTONOMY PRO-

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GRAM, THE GON RELEASED THOUSANDS OF THESE MISKITOS IN JANUARY AND FEBRUARY AND ALLOWED THEM TO RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGES, WHERE THEY DISCOVERED THAT THEIR HOUSES AND BOATS HAD BEEN BURNED, AND THEIR LIVESTOCK SLAUGHTERED BY THE EPS AFTER THEIR 198

1-82 REMOVAL. THE RETURNEES ALSO FOUND THAT THE GON WAS UNABLE TO SUPPLY THE CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS, AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT AND FOOD IT HAD PROMISED TO HELP THEM REBUILD. MOST OF THOSE PEOPLE SIMPLY CONTINUED ON TO HONDURAS.

B) (U) THEY, AND OTHER MISKITOS, MAY ALSO HAVE BEEN PROMPTED BY RUMORS OF A NEW, LESS DRAMATIC AND SMALLER SCALE RELOCATION CAMPAIGN BY THE SANDINISTAS. THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL REPORTS IN BARRICADE OF MISKITO VILLAGES "ASKING" TO BE MOVED FROM THE RIO COCO, AND THERE IS SPECULATION THAT THE SANDINISTAS WOULD LIKE POTENTIAL KISAN SUPPORTERS AWAY FROM THE BORDER. GIVEN TRADITIONAL MISKITO DISTRUST OF THE "SPANISH," AND THE UNHAPPY EXPERIENCE OF THE LAST RELOCATION, THESE RUMORS COULD HAVE HAD A POWERFUL EFFECT.

C) (U) RENEWED FIGHTING ON THE ATLANTIC COAST SINCE FEBRUARY ALSO ACTED AS A POWERFUL SPUR. THE PARTIAL TRUCE BEGAN TO CRUMBLE IN EARLY FEBRUARY WHEN LARGE SANDINISTA AIR, NAVAL AND GROUND FORCES PURSUED MISKITO LEADER BROOKLYN RIVERA AND A GROUP OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS HE WAS ESCORTING. THIS EFFORT APPARENTLY LED TO THE RESUMPTION OF FIGHTING. SOME REFUGEES REPORT THAT THEIR VILLAGES HAD BEEN BOMBED AND STRAFED BY EPS AIRCRAFT. OTHER REFUGEES REPORT ATTACKS ON THEIR VILLAGES BY EPS ARMORED VEHICLES AND ARTILLERY. FORTY MISKITO CIVILIANS HAVE BEEN REPORTED KILLED BY EPS ATTACKS IN THE FIRST TWO WEEKS OF APRIL. THE EPS ALSO HAS BEEN ACCUSED OF ARRESTING OR ASSASSINATING MISKITOS SUSPECTED OF TIES TO

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